1. INTRODUCTION

This section analyzes and discusses the extent to which the proposed project’s artificial lighting would affect the visual environment of the project site and surrounding area. New light sources associated with implementation of the proposed project are identified, and the potential for these light sources to affect light-sensitive land uses, which include residences, commercial or institutional uses that require minimal nighttime lighting, and natural areas, is evaluated.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section includes analysis and discussion about the extent to which the proposed project’s artificial lighting affects the visual environment. In order to determine whether significant impacts would result from the project’s nighttime illumination, a description of the existing ambient light conditions on the site and in the surrounding vicinity is provided, light-sensitive uses are identified, and the potential change in illumination associated with project implementation is considered and evaluated.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently minimal nighttime illumination exists on the project site. Existing light sources are those associated with the single-family residence and equestrian facility, as well as ranching operations, on the site. However, the site is located in the foothills of the Santa Susana Mountains with views of the illuminated San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles Basin. Additionally, nighttime illumination is provided just east of the project site in the Porter Ranch community. Potentially light-sensitive land uses in the project area include the residences within the Porter Ranch community, the undeveloped open space surrounding the project site, scenic vista points such as the ones along the Oat Mountain ridgeline above the project site, and horsekeeping areas east of the project site.

4. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Los Angeles Municipal Code

A number of Los Angeles Municipal Codes relate to aesthetics, visual quality, and nighttime illumination of projects, as summarized below:

- **Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 12.21 A 5(k).** All lights used to illuminate a parking area shall be designed, located, and arranged so as to reflect the light away from any streets and adjacent premises.
• **Chapter 1, Article 7, Section 17.08.** Plans for street lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the Bureau of Street Lighting for subdivision maps.

• **Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117.** No exterior light source may cause more than two foot-candles of lighting intensity or generate direct glare onto exterior glazed windows or glass doors; elevated habitable porch, deck, or balcony; or any ground surface intended for uses such as recreation, barbecue or lawn areas or any other property containing a residential unit or units.

### 5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

#### a. Significance Thresholds

The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* indicates that the determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

**NIGHT-1** The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources; and

**NIGHT-2** The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

#### b. Project Impacts

**Nighttime Illumination**

**NIGHT-1** Impacts related to nighttime illumination would be significant based on the change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources.

**Construction Impacts**

As discussed above, nighttime illumination on the project site is minimal and is primarily generated by uses associated with the single-family residence, the equestrian facility, and ranching operations. Since the surrounding land is undeveloped, no permanent light sources are maintained within the adjacent open space areas. The closest major sources of nighttime illumination are found within the Porter Ranch community and the communities at the base of the Santa Susana Mountains. Additionally, the site and surrounding area are exposed to nighttime light emitted from the entire San Fernando Valley.

During construction, nighttime lighting would be maintained on the project site for security purposes. Since construction activity would be limited to daytime hours, no lighting associated with the operation of construction equipment would be utilized during the nighttime. The use of security lighting during construction would be temporary. However, the potential increase in ambient illumination levels could be significant if not properly implemented. Therefore, incorporation of mitigation measures MM-NIGHT-1 and MM-NIGHT-2 would reduce the contribution of construction lighting to ambient illumination.
nighttime illumination levels. **MM-NIGHT-1** would limit the use of security lights to only those locations on the construction site requiring illumination. **MM-NIGHT-2** would require that all security lights are properly shielded and projected downwards such that light is directed onto the project site only. With implementation of these mitigation measures and temporary usage of nighttime security lighting during construction, the impact to existing ambient illumination levels would be less than significant.

**Operational Impacts**

The proposed project would introduce new permanent sources of lighting to the project site and project area. These sources consist of streetlights on the project site and along the proposed Mason Avenue extension, domestic indoor and outdoor lighting including security lights, lighting on the playfields and parking lot at the public park, and lighting for the equestrian facility. The combined effect of these light sources would increase ambient illumination levels on the project site and in the project area.

However, the project site is located approximately 2,000 feet west of the intersection of Sesnon Boulevard and Mason Avenue along the western boundary of the Porter Ranch community. The existing residential uses within this community include various indoor and outdoor light sources as well as street lighting, which collectively contribute to ambient light levels characteristic of suburban residential settings. This ambient light is perpetuated by adjacent communities and extended into and throughout the San Fernando Valley. Operation of the proposed project would result in ambient light levels that are consistent with present levels generated by the Porter Ranch community and surrounding uses; the project would not generate light levels above what is normally experienced within the adjacent communities. In this respect, the project would introduce new light sources that are comparable to and compatible with the existing light character of Porter Ranch and other neighboring communities.

Additionally, as part of project implementation, approximately 127 acres of the site would be set aside as permanent open space on the northern and western edges of the project site. This permanent open space would serve to create a permanent urban boundary or limit line whereby no additional lighting associated with development or urbanization would occur. Therefore, based on the quantity and proximity of nighttime illumination existing within adjacent communities such as Porter Ranch and throughout the entire San Fernando Valley, the increase in ambient nighttime lighting generated by the proposed project would be less than significant.

**NIGHT-2** Impacts related to nighttime illumination would be significant based on the extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas.
**Construction Impacts**

As mentioned earlier, potential light-sensitive land uses existing in the project vicinity include the residences within the Porter Ranch community, the undeveloped natural open spaces surrounding the project site, scenic vista points such as the ones along the Oat Mountain ridgeline above the project site, and horsekeeping areas east of the project site. If not properly implemented, lighting used for security purposes during project construction has the potential to spill onto these sensitive land uses and result in a significant impact. However, mitigation measures MM-NIGHT-1 and MM-NIGHT-2 shall prevent the trespass of light onto light-sensitive areas during construction. As mentioned above, MM-NIGHT-1 would limit the use of security lights to only those locations on the construction site requiring illumination and MM-NIGHT-2 would require that all security lights are properly shielded and projected downwards such that light is directed onto the project site only. With implementation of these mitigation measures and temporary usage of nighttime security lighting during construction, the impact to light-sensitive areas outside the project boundary would be less than significant.

**Operational Impacts**

The proposed project would introduce new permanent sources of lighting to the project site and project area. These sources consist of streetlights on the project site and along the proposed Mason Avenue extension, domestic indoor and outdoor lighting including security lights, lighting on the playfields and parking lot at the public park, and lighting for the equestrian facility. The use and intensity of the lighting would be comparable to that of the surrounding community and the undeveloped portions of the site would not require the use of any nighttime lighting. However, unless mitigated, the various light sources have the potential to spill over onto or otherwise affect adjacent light-sensitive uses including the residences within the Porter Ranch community, the undeveloped open space surrounding the project site, scenic vista points, and horsekeeping areas, resulting in a significant illumination impact. Mitigation measures MM-NIGHT-3 through MM-NIGHT-7 would reduce light spillover by incorporating shielding and screening, projecting light sources downward, limiting the use of park and equestrian facility lighting, and lowering lighting intensity. Furthermore, the project would comply with the Los Angeles Municipal Codes regarding parking lot lighting, street lighting, and outdoor lighting, as identified above in Subsection 4, Regulatory Framework. With Code compliance and the incorporation of mitigation, the potential for light spillover to affect light-sensitive land uses would be reduced to a less than significant level.
c. Cumulative Impacts

The proposed development would introduce new permanent sources of light to the project site where presently undeveloped land is located. The proposed development would alter approximately 158 acres of the existing site from mostly unimproved land to a suburban residential neighborhood. The project would be located approximately 2,000 feet west of the intersection of Sesnon Boulevard and Mason Avenue along the western boundary of Tract 45297 in the Porter Ranch community. Tract 45297 is currently developed with single-family residences and additional development will be completed associated with the build-out of the Porter Ranch Specific Plan, including Tracts 50505 through 50511 (see Figure IV.A.1-2). Existing development along the Santa Susana foothills is contiguous with development across the San Fernando Valley. Planned development within the foothills, including the build-out of the Porter Ranch Specific Plan and the build-out of Tract 54153 (identified as a related project by the City of Los Angeles), in addition to the proposed project, represents a marginal increase in development within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan Area and the Santa Susana foothills due to the proximity and quantity of existing development. Thus, ambient illumination levels are anticipated to increase in the project area, but would not result in a cumulative significant impact due to the present extent of nighttime illumination within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch area and entire San Fernando Valley.

d. Mitigation Measures

MM-NIGHT-1 The use of security lighting during project construction shall be limited to only those locations on the construction site requiring illumination.

MM-NIGHT-2 All security lights shall be properly shielded and projected downwards during construction such that light is directed onto the project site only.

MM-NIGHT-3 Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the project applicant shall develop a lighting plan that shall be subject to approval by the City of Los Angeles Planning Department. In the plan, all lighting shall be downcast luminaries with light patterns shielded and directed away from adjacent open space areas. Mercury vapor and halide lighting shall not be used on the perimeter of the developed areas and in areas adjacent to undeveloped open space. Security lighting throughout the project shall be controlled by motion detectors, to limit light shine to necessary periods. (Also MM-BIO-5)

MM-NIGHT-4 High-pressure sodium and/or cut-off fixtures shall be used instead of typical mercury-vapor fixtures for outdoor lighting.
MM-NIGHT-5 The lighting plan shall provide structural and/or vegetative screening from sensitive uses.

MM-NIGHT-6 The lighting plan shall design exterior lighting to conform illumination to the project site and/or to areas that do not include light-sensitive uses.

MM-NIGHT-7 The hours of operation of outdoor lighting at the equestrian facility shall be restricted to the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. The hours of operation of the public park shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

e. Adverse Effects

Impacts associated with construction lighting would be less than significant with incorporation of MM-NIGHT-1 and MM-NIGHT-2. Due to the extent of adjacent nighttime illumination generated by the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch area and the entire San Fernando Valley, the increase in ambient nighttime illumination due to project operation would not result in a significant impact. Additionally, operation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact to light-sensitive uses with implementation of MM-NIGHT-3 through MM-NIGHT-7, which would reduce the potential for light spillover as well as the intensity and use of nighttime light.